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December 23, 2005



Mr. Mike Barton, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
3132 Channel Dr.
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Dear Commissioner Barton:

Attached is Resolution #05-103 from the City of Valdez, stating our recommended changes to the 2006-2008 STIP. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the transportation projects that have or have not been listed for our area, and to provide you with information regarding these critical issues.

A summary of our comments include:

1. National Highway System Improvements. The Richardson Highway is an essential component of the National Highway System in Alaska. Current and future economic development projects are dependent on infrastructure improvements along the entire highway. These include:
 - a. Bridge repair and replacement
 - b. Road Widening and Alignment
 - c. Turn lanes for materials transport facilities at the Port of Valdez
 - d. Enhancements for visitor facilities
2. Marine Highway System Improvements. The Marine Highway System is an integral part of the overall transportation system for Alaska. The rehabilitation and replacement of the vessels in order to ensure safe, reliable, and efficient movement of goods and services now and into the future must be planned for and included in the STIP. Earlier commitments on the year-round assignment of the Chenega Fast Ferry to Prince William Sound must be restored and funding for expansion of the ferry services must be included in the STIP.

One final recommendation on the overall STIP is to include all projects that are funded, not only through the federal transportation dollars but by the State General Fund as well. This will provide better communication with local communities and allow improved opportunities for public comment on all projects.

I compliment your agency on the format of the new STIP document and the web accessible features that allow you to sort the projects by region and other categories. This user friendly and efficient tool is a great enhancement to the STIP process.

If you have any questions or need further information on any of the City of Valdez's recommended projects, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hozey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "H".

John Hozey
City Manager

cc: Dave Sanches, Area Planner, DOT
Mike Isaacs, District Manager, DOT

CITY OF VALDEZ

RESOLUTION NO. 05-103

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ,
ALASKA, RECOMMENDING CHANGES TO THE 2006-2008
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) is currently accepting comments on the draft 2006-2008 STIP; and

WHEREAS, in order to best serve the interest of the state in the use of scarce transportation funds, key emphasis of the 2006-2008 STIP policy objectives are to achieve a safer transportation system for all involved, to connect communities and resources in order to improve Alaska's economy and reduce the cost of living in outlying communities, to modernize to current standards and upgrade capacity on the National Highway System, and to increase the safety standards applicable to public ferries; and

WHEREAS, based on the need to upgrade sections of the National Highway System that are below current standards, accomplish pavement rehabilitation, and provide safety improvements or capacity increases, the ADOT has made the improvement of NHS routes a state priority in allocating funds for the STIP; and

WHEREAS, the Richardson Highway is a part of the National Highway System and is critical to current and future economic development opportunities for the State of Alaska; and,

WHEREAS, ADOT has restricted the weight limits of eight bridges, including the Lowe River Lower Crossing, Lowe River Lower Keystone, Tsaina River, Tiekle River Upper crossing, Castner Creek, Shaw Creek, Chena Flood Channel NB and Chena Flood Channel SB; and has identified these bridges as needing repair or replacement; and,

WHEREAS, the narrow road surfaces, unsafe alignments and these weight-restricted bridges are limiting the development of our State's resources and hindering other economic development opportunities such as tourism and commerce; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Valdez Container Terminal is a critical transportation link for the movement of equipment, materials and supplies to the interior communities and businesses of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Richardson Highway currently does not have any turning lanes for access to the Port of Valdez Container Terminal, and the Long Combination Vehicles (LCV), as well as standard freight trucks do not have adequate turning room to

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safely negotiate the turn without crossing into the oncoming lanes or going off the shoulders of the roads; and

WHEREAS, the lack of turning lanes creates a hazard to oncoming traffic and is causing deterioration of the road shoulders from the inadvertent use because of the lack of turning room; and

WHEREAS, the ADOT does not identify any turning lanes, widening or alignment improvements between Valdez and Delta Junction, and only identifies repair or replacement of one of eight bridges (Shaw Creek) on the Richardson Highway in the 2006-2008 STIP; and

WHEREAS, the early completion of these improvements is vital to improve safety, connect communities and to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support key economic and security projects that are on the horizon and need a system-wide transportation network; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Marine Highway System provides an important link among the communities of coastal Alaska, allowing for the movement of goods and services and offering an opportunity for economic development; and

WHEREAS, Ferry replacement, rehabilitation and improvements previously included in the 2004-2006 STIP have been cancelled, while other long-awaited improvements have been delayed; and

WHEREAS, visitor enhancements that will provide improved access to explore Alaska by motor vehicle, bicycle or on foot, contribute to essential economic development opportunities for local communities; and

WHEREAS, use of the federal highway funds to address the needs of our road, ferry and trail systems to ensure safe, reliable and efficient movement of goods and services and provide important opportunities for state-wide resource and economic development projects should be the highest priority for the 2006-2008 STIP.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, that the City of Valdez

1. Urges the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to make the following improvements a high priority for inclusion in the 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program:
 - a. Repair or replacement of the Lowe River Lower Crossing, Lowe River Lower Keystone, Tsaina River, Tiekle River Upper crossing, Castner Creek, Shaw Creek, Chena Flood Channel NB and Chena Flood Channel SB.

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- b. Turn Lanes on the Richardson Highway for the Port of Valdez Container Terminal.
- c. Rehabilitation and replacement of Ferry Vessels.
- d. Road and visitor facilities at the Valdez Glacier
- e. Bike Path improvements and expansion from Valdez through Keystone Canyon

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, this 19th day of December, 2005.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA


Bert L. Cottle, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sheri L. Pierce, CMC/AEE, City Clerk

